

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for operating a wireless communication system, comprising:

determining, at a network operator, a location of a mobile station;

determining if the location of the mobile station indicates that the mobile station may gain access to another allowed network operator; and

if so, transmitting a message to the mobile station for assisting the mobile station in gaining access to the other, allowed network operator.

2. A method as in claim 1, wherein if the location of the mobile station indicates that the mobile station may not gain access to another allowed network operator, transmitting a message to the mobile station for inhibiting background scanning by the mobile station.

3. A method as in claim 1, wherein the message comprises information descriptive of a frequency on which the mobile station may receive a transmission from the other, allowed network operator.

4. A wireless communication system comprising at least one network operator and at least one mobile station located in a service area of said network operator, and further comprising a network operator data processor for determining a location of a mobile station and a database that is accessed by the data processor for determining if the location of the mobile station indicates that the mobile station may gain access to another, allowed network operator, said data processor being responsive to a determination that the mobile station may gain access to another allowed network operator for transmitting a message to the

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mobile station for assisting the mobile station in gaining access to the other, allowed network operator.

5. A wireless communication system as in claim 4, wherein if the location of the mobile station indicates that the mobile station may not gain access to another allowed network operator, said data processor transmitting a message to the mobile station for inhibiting background scanning by the mobile station.

6. A wireless communication system as in claim 4, wherein the message comprises information descriptive of a frequency on which the mobile station may receive a transmission from the other, allowed network operator.

7. A mobile station comprising a RF transceiver, a data processor and a memory, said data processor being responsive to a message received through said transceiver from a network operator that is currently serving said mobile station for storing information into said memory, said data processor being responsive to said stored information for one of inhibiting background scanning for another network operator, or for attempting to access another network operator in accordance with the stored information.

8. A mobile station as in claim 7, wherein in one case the message comprises information descriptive of a frequency on which the mobile station may receive a transmission from the other network operator.